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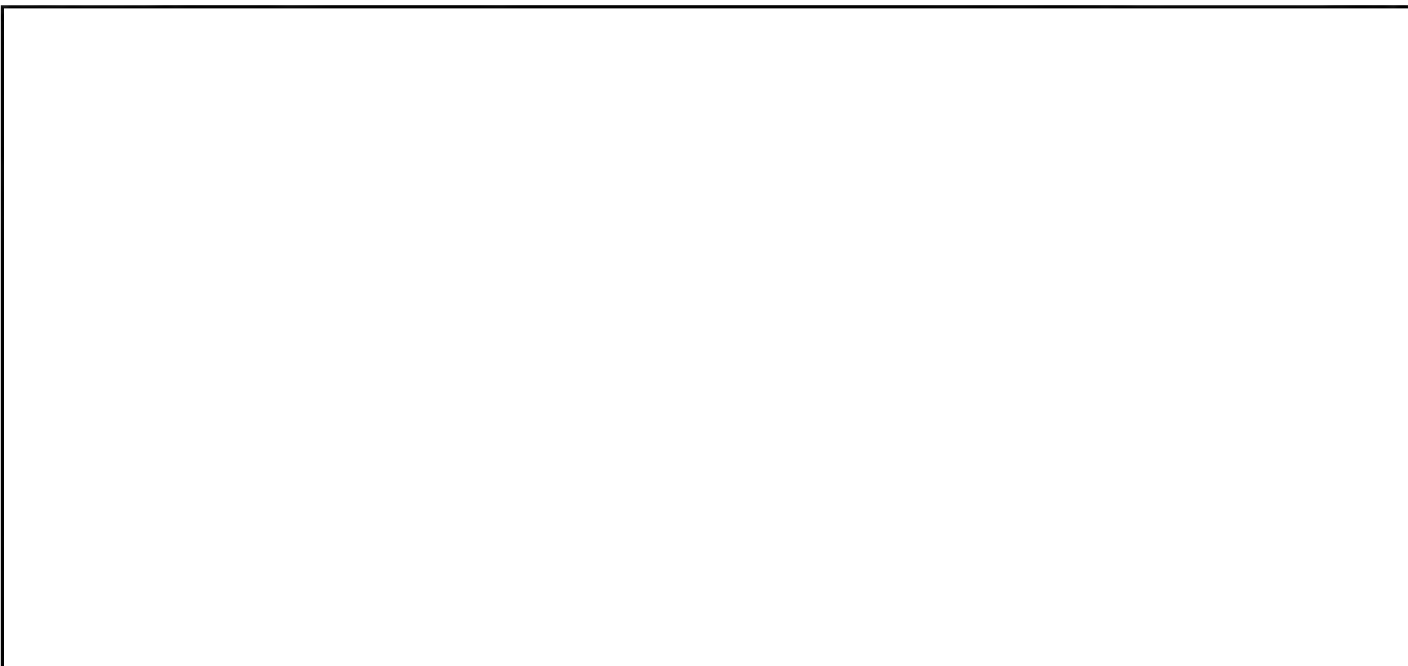
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3. Chou En-lai says Peiping can guarantee Korean peace without USSR:

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Chinese Communist premier Chou En-lai recently told the Indian ambassador in Peiping that the Chinese are "eager" to have a Korean political conference and that the American insistence on Soviet participation with a vote is "unreasonable and ridiculous."

Arguing that the American attitude implies a lack of confidence in Peiping's signature as a guarantee on Korea, Chou indicated that necessary guarantees should be provided by Communist China, North Korea, South Korea, and the United States.

Comment: Despite Peiping's frequent hints that it resents being regarded as a simple instrument of Moscow, it is believed that the two parties have agreed to have Peiping present the Communist position in any Korean talks and to preserve Moscow's freedom of action.

Chou's remarks suggest that the Communists may propose to drop the Soviet Union from the conference altogether.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

4. Vietnamese official fears political consequences of Viet Minh offensive:

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The immediate importance of the Viet Minh drive across central Laos, in the eyes of Vietnamese nationalists, is the manner in which it can be played up in France to strengthen elements in that country favoring a negotiated peace, according to Governor Tri of Tonkin.

In a conversation with the American consul in Hanoi on 28 December, Tri cited the "specious but plausible" analogy that has been made to the 38th Parallel in Korea. He feared that if the Viet Minh can consolidate its position on the Mekong, while carrying out maneuvers in northwest Tonkin susceptible of intense propaganda treatment, it can effectively appeal to that portion of French public opinion which already favors negotiations.

Comment: The political problems posed by the enemy's move across Laos were reportedly responsible for the French decision to reinforce the troops in the area. The American army attaché in Saigon has observed that this reinforcement enabled the Viet Minh to gain its primary objective, the dispersal of French reserves.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

5. Prospect of American aid to Pakistan encourages defense discussions in Middle East:

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The Pakistani prime minister implied in a talk with Ambassador Hildreth on 28 December that the Iraqi king and prime minister might discuss regional defense arrangements during their visit to Karachi on 17 January. Mohammed Ali emphasized that his government will be acutely embarrassed if the United States has not decided by then to give military assistance to Pakistan.

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Also on 28 December, the Turkish prime minister told Ambassador Warren that the Iraqi ambassador in Ankara had recently expressed interest in Iraq's early adherence to a possible defense pact between Turkey and Pakistan.

Comment: Reports that the United States may grant military aid to Pakistan appear to have stimulated regional defense thinking in Pakistan, Turkey and Iraq. American assistance to Pakistan would probably further encourage local initiative in Middle Eastern defense planning.

6. Egypt may be reassessing its foreign policy:

Egypt's recall for consultation of its envoys to Moscow, Washington, London, New Delhi, and Karachi indicates that the Nagib regime is now engaged in a serious attempt to reassess its future policy toward the West.

Following the recent propaganda campaign threatening neutralism, the present consultations in Cairo appear to be aimed at achieving a firm Egyptian position before the meeting of the Arab League Council scheduled for 9 January.

The lack of progress in recent informal Anglo-Egyptian talks will probably encourage Egypt to push strongly in the League sessions for a neutral pan-Arab position.

Despite the probable continuation of strong anti-Western propaganda, closer Orbit relations are not envisaged, and Egypt is unlikely for the present to take steps which would close the door to American economic aid. [REDACTED]

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